

OrdnanceReports

News updates from around the world



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This publication is produced by the U.S. Army Ordnance Corps Communications Coordinator. The purpose of this publication is to provide Command Information materiel concerning world events and the U.S. military's role in those events. Ordnance specific events will be covered if appropriate. Direct your correspondence to Ed Starnes at 410-278-2415 (DSN 298-2415), or email edward.starnes@ocs.apg.army.mil.

Logistics agency lines out its support to forces in Iraq

by Rudi Williams, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, June 6, 2003 – “Speed can kill the enemy” were some of Army Gen. Tommy Franks’ words of wisdom for his commanders and troops during Operation Iraqi Freedom. And the U.S. forces’ lightning thrust to Baghdad with minimal Iraqi resistance and few U.S. and coalition casualties substantiates this saying.

But these fast-moving combatants created a problem for the Defense Logistics Agency’s logisticians: The combatants outran their supply line.

Fortunately, the problem wasn’t widespread, nor did it last long, according to DLA’s director, Vice Adm. Keith W. Lippert, during a recent interview.

“Supplying the fastest moving combatants in history was an interesting thing,” said Lippert, the former commander of the Naval Supply Systems Command. “There were some isolated instances where warfighters were saying they’d run short on MREs (meals ready to eat) and bottled water. We always had enough of MREs and bottled water in theater.”

Inefficiency wasn’t the problem, Lippert noted. “The issue was, they advanced so quickly that in many cases they outran the distribution lines,” he explained. “That’s where the shortages came. The troops marched to Baghdad in a hurry and it was a matter of the supply lines catching up with them.”

When it comes to comparing and contrasting support of troops during 1991’s Operation Desert Storm to those in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Lippert said, “There have been major, major differences. I’d put it under the broad titles of people being forward deployed with the warfighter – a big difference.”

Before the first shot was fired in Iraq, DLA already had customer representatives embedded with warfighters at 71 different sites around the world. At the request of U.S. Central Command, there were 72 logistics experts in-theater working as contingency support

teams.

“They’re there as logistics experts,” Lippert said. “They communicate back to us what the issues and requirements are so we can respond much quicker than any time before.”

He pointed out that communications was much faster during Iraqi Freedom than in Desert Storm, when telephones were the primary mode of communications.

The admiral noted that he uses a secure Internet system to stay in daily contact with the combatant commanders’ logistics heads in theater. The messages also go right down to the logistics center that operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

“So I’m in communications with the warfighter in-theater and also with the Joint Staff,” he said. “We get almost real-time exchange of information for what the issues are. That’s a big, big difference than in anything we’ve had in the past.”

During Desert Storm, there wasn’t any way of telling exactly where shipments were or what was in them. Consequently, warfighters were ordering three times more, “hoping to get the quantity they needed,” Lippert said.

That problem was solved during Iraqi Freedom by using advanced technology and having specialists in the field to handle any problems. “As we issue materiel to our distribution depots, everything gets a radio frequency identification tag on it,” Lippert noted. “The recipient scans the ID tag to find out what is in the van and where it’s going. So there’s asset visibility that has made a huge difference.”

Getting involved in the early stages of advanced planning helped DLA prepare to support warfighters during a conflict, according to the admiral. “All the way back in July 2002, the Office of the Secretary of Defense asked us to start preparing for a potential conflict,” Lippert said.



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Logistics agency lines out its support to forces in Iraq continued

“They gave us the force structure, but it wasn’t exactly what we had in Operation Iraqi Freedom, but it wasn’t too far off. We developed requirements based upon that – medicines, food, spare parts, fuel – right on down the line.

“We bought things like the chemical protection suits, MREs, sand bags and construction material,” he continued. “We were consuming about 350,000 of those meals per day, so we had to make sure we had plenty of MREs. We issued 48 million MREs.

“They’re still eating about 350,000 MREs per day,” the admiral said. “We try to keep about seven days’ worth of MREs on hand. So that’s more than 2 million in theater.”

MREs and certain aspects of the war got a lot of attention, but to Lippert, the most rewarding thing was the troop and weapons systems readiness.

“We had a very ready force to go into Operation Iraqi Freedom,” Lippert said. “That was done because a lot of people have worked very hard to improve the overall readiness. DoD and the president made concerted efforts to increase the funding for spare parts, so we were in good shape.”

Traditionally, DLA has stored materiel in warehouses and issues it as necessary, which incurs additional costs. Now the organization is saving thousands of taxpayers’ dollars by contracting civilian-sector companies to manage and issue materiel.

“There are many items that move at such velocity that the private sector is willing to assume the inventory management of those items,” Lippert said.

“We monitor their performance and compare our costs to manage it to the civilian company’s cost manage it,” he said. “If they’re cheaper, we award these contracts to them. For example, we don’t have any food in our warehouses anymore. We go right to them and they give us fresh stock, usually brands you recognize.”

Lippert said most of the medical supplies are handled the same way and “we’re doing it more and more with spare parts.”

This new way of doing business requires state-of-the-art information technology systems, the admiral noted. For example, for the vast majority of items, DLA is using a system that was designed in the 1960s.

“It’s written in 6 million lines of COBOL (common business-oriented language) and should have been replaced 20 years ago,” he said. “We’ve just started replacing the system with something we call ‘business systems modernization.’ It’s a project that uses SAP (a software company) as a backbone and has several other companies that has given us state-of-the-art world-class information technology systems.”

He said instead of taking days to get items out of DLA, it now takes hours. “We have 170,000 of our 4.6 million items up on the system now,” Lippert noted. “We’re learning and trying to figure out to

adjust our practices to these best business practices. By 2006 we plan to be up entirely on this whole system.”

DLA is now involved in something called ‘reconstitution.’ “We have to figure out what we need to buy ahead of time so we can have the equipment back up to its full mission capability,” he said.

“We’re working closely with the services trying to identify in advance what these requirements are so we can get them bought,” Lippert said.

Another lesson was learned from setting up a forward distribution depot in Bahrain, according to Lippert. “We put construction-type of material in there – wire, sand bags,” he said. “It was a huge success. We had a hard time keeping it filled because of the volume of business.”

The admiral recently returned from Bahrain and Kuwait, where he discussed whether permanent depots should be opened in those countries. If the depots are established, the main question is, “What type of material should we stock there on a full-time basis?” Lippert noted.

The admiral pointed out that DLA is a joint command with more than 22,000 civilian employees and some 500 military for all of the services. A tenant organization at Fort Belvoir, Va., DLA manages more than 4.6 million items worldwide.

With its sales and services garnering more than \$24 billion annually, if the organization was compared to Fortune 500 companies, it would rank No. 69. The far-flung global organization operates in 48 states and in 28 different countries.

Managing 4.6 million items is a mammoth task, which includes providing the services with 100 percent of their fuel, food, medical supplies and construction materials, and 90 percent of the repair parts they need.

“We get on an average 30,000 requisitions or requests for material per day,” Lippert noted. “To accomplish that, we award about 4,000 contracts per day. So it’s a large business from that aspect, no matter how you look at it.”

With 22 distribution depots worldwide – from Japan to Germany – DLA runs the world’s largest distribution center. Much of the material is forward-positioned in strategic locations overseas. “We run a national stockpile, defense cataloging service and property disposal operation,” the admiral said.

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U.S., Polish paratroopers jump into joint exercise

by Spc. Adrian Schulte



VINCENZA, Italy (Army News Service, June 9, 2003) — Paratroopers from the U.S. Army Southern European Task Force and the Polish 6th Airborne Brigade parachuted into Poland during the night of June 6 in the opening phase of Exercise Immediate Response '03.

This operation is primarily a computer-assisted command post exercise lasting through June 10. The airborne assault

simulated the seizure of an airbase for the introduction of additional U.S. forces, officials said.

Two aircraft, one Polish and one American, dropped about 50 paratroopers, allowing the soldiers from the two armies to exchange jump wings. Six Polish airborne, who jumped from the American C-130, had to adjust their exiting procedures to coincide with their American counterparts.

"Whenever we jump, as soon as the jump master gives the go, everybody immediately goes and follows each other out," explained Staff Sgt. Ronald Samia, SETAF communications chief who earned his senior parachutist badge on the jump. "The Polish soldiers jump totally differently than we do so we had to do a lot of rehearsals. One thing they do is an individual tap out. Each soldier will stand in the door and wait for a tap out. So we had to try and get that out of their routine for the jump."

Following the airborne insertion, soldiers from SETAF and the Polish 6th Airborne Brigade immediately began establishing the forward command and control headquarters and preparing for the arrival of

the U.S. 1st Infantry Division, 2nd Brigade forces that will be needed during the non-combatant evacuation, or NEO exercise, which simulates the evacuation of American citizens from a potentially hostile environment.

Immediate response '03 is part of the Military Cooperation Initiative launched between the U.S. and Poland in 2002 to enhance capabilities for future bilateral, coalition or alliance operations, officials said.

The purpose of Immediate Response '03 is to enhance joint and combined interoperability, conduct bilateral training with a partner nation and exercise command and control functions from distributed locations during a NEO exercise. The main exercise participants are the headquarters unit of SETAF, elements of the Polish 6th Airborne Brigade and the 2nd brigade of the U.S. 1st ID.

Crossing cultural boundaries, soldiers from both countries said they are gaining valuable experiences during the exercise.

"It has been interesting," said Pvt. Edwin Zerpa, 13th Military Police company. "We are learning from each other as far as culture and language and how they operate militarily. It will be and has already been a worthwhile experience."

Polish soldiers are embracing the experience to work with their American counterparts.

"It is very exciting working with the Americans. I've never had the opportunity to work with them," said Pvt. Milewski Maciej, Polish 2nd Mechanized Brigade. "It lets me work on my English and we are getting to do a lot of things that we don't usually do."

(Editor's note: Spc. Adrian Schulte is a member of SETAF Public Affairs.)



Paul C. Rock, president of the Vietnam Survivors group, stands with his fellow veterans and one of eight banners signed by the public. Hundreds of signatures fill the banners, which will be displayed during the parade. From the back left are Paul Rock, John Bennett, Pete Reynolds and Chuck DeSario. Kneeling in front from the left are Dean Magnuson, Bruce Carter, Larry Tidquist, Michael Smith, Pat Huss and Earl Kolbe. Photo courtesy of Paul C. Rock

Kabul peacekeepers take new precautions

by Todd Pitman

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) - Peacekeepers in Afghanistan's capital will take more security precautions because of a bus bombing that killed four soldiers, but the threat in Kabul is high and more attacks are likely, a peacekeeping official said Sunday.

German Lt. Col. Thomas Lobbering, spokesman for the International Security Assistance Force known as ISAF, stressed there had been no specific warning before Saturday's attack.

"Let's make it absolutely clear that ISAF is here in Kabul because the situation is not yet stable and not yet 100 percent safe," Lobbering said.

Four German soldiers were killed and 29 wounded in the blast, which occurred when a man driving a yellow taxi pulled up beside a bus carrying 33 peacekeepers in eastern Kabul and detonated between 220 to 1,110 pounds of explosives.

Lobbering said peacekeepers had known for months that suicide car bombers might strike in the capital, but preventing such attacks was almost impossible.

"There is no single day without warnings and we take each and every warning very seriously," Lobbering said. "On the other hand, we have to recognize that ... there is no 100 percent sureness to avoid such terrorist attacks."

The first of the wounded soldiers arrived in Germany Sunday and were transferred to military hospitals for treatment.

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German soldiers of International Security Assistance Force stand guard outside the military base in Kabul , Afghanistan, Sunday, June 8, 2003. A spokesman for peacekeeping soldiers patrolling the Afghan capital vowed Sunday that the international forces would "not step back a single step," a day after a suicide bombing killed four German soldiers and wounded 31 in the worst-ever attack on the security force. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)

U.S. troops assist injured German peacekeepers; soldier killed in Iraq

by Gerry J. Gilmore, American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON, June 9, 2003 – U.S. military medical personnel treated the more than 20 injured German peacekeepers injured in the June 7 suicide bombing in Kabul, Afghanistan, according to a Coalition Joint Task Force 180 press release.

Four other German soldiers, part of the International Security Assistance Force conducting security and peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan, were killed in that car-bomb attack. The injured were then taken to Bagram Air Base for further treatment.

German-Dutch forces are currently leading the ISAF contingent.

In other Afghanistan action, a Task Force Devil patrol took one person under control and discovered a small cache in the vicinity of Shkin on June 8, according to the release.

The cache included two AK-47s, 8 magazines of 100 rounds each of AK-47 ammunition, 800 machine gun rounds, a shipping plug and cap to a mine and an 82mm mortar shipping case. The cache was found next to two mortar firing pits.

Two rockets were fired in the direction of the firebase at Asadabad June 7, the release stated. Soldiers at the firebase saw two individuals leaving the area. There were no casualties or damage to equipment.

In Iraq, an American soldier was shot and killed June 8 at a traffic checkpoint in Al Qaim, according to a U.S. Central Command press release. The checkpoint, according to news reports, is located near the Syrian border.

A vehicle containing several people pulled up to the checkpoint. After requesting help for a "sick" person in the vehicle, the release continued, two people got out of the vehicle and shot the U.S. soldier.

Other U.S. soldiers at the checkpoint returned fire, killing one assailant, according to the release. Another assailant was captured. At least one assailant escaped in the vehicle, the release said.

The name and unit of the soldier who was killed is being withheld pending notification of next of kin.

An investigation of the incident is underway.

U.S. Forces Korea to start major realignment next year

by Spc. Bill Putnam

WASHINGTON (Army News Service June 9, 2003) -The Army will be moving from bases located near the Demilitarized Zone and the South Korean capital to “hubs” farther south, and that massive shift could start as early as next year, according to a joint document released by the South Korean and U.S. governments June 5.

The move is a sweeping change of policy, according to some reports in the media last week. They say it’s a change from the current policy which has used the 14,000 soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division and 7,000 soldiers stationed at Yongson Army Garrison in Seoul as a de-facto trip wire to guarantee U.S. involvement to help defend South Korea from a potential invasion from the north for the last 50 years.

“This is a time to move beyond outmoded concepts or catch phrases such as the term ‘tripwire,’” said Paul Wolfowitz, the deputy U.S. defense secretary, in Seoul June 2.

Although no time line for the move has been established, said Lt. Col. Steve Boylan, U.S. Eighth Army public affairs officer in an e-mail interview, the move south and opening of newer facilities will take years and doesn’t mean the alliance between South Korea and America is flagging.

“We are committed to the alliance and will not weaken that alliance by these plans,” Boylan said.

Some South Korean officials initially resisted the move earlier this year saying it would give North Korea the impression of the U.S. pulling out of the peninsula. They agreed after guarantees that the U.S. will still maintain a presence north of the Han through training at the Korea Training Center, located near Camp Casey.

Boylan also said that there will be no immediate affect to the soldiers currently stationed in Korea or those that are being assigned to 8th Army units in the near future.

The 2nd ID at 15 bases north of South Korea’s Han River and just south of the DMZ will be the major unit moved south of the Han River in two phases that will take place over the next few years, the statement said.

About 6,000 of the 7,000 soldiers stationed at the U.S. Forces, Korea Headquarters at Yongsan Army Garrison, and located in downtown Seoul, Korea, will also move south, the statement said.

The first phase of the move will probably start as early as this year when the 2nd ID begins to move from those 15 bases to camps Red Cloud and Casey.

After the South Korean government procures land south of the Han River next year, the division and the Yongson Garrison will move to major “hubs” south of the river that also bisects Seoul, the statement said. The land now used by the Army will be handed over to the South Koreans at that point.

The U.S. has also offered to pay about \$220 million for the new facilities, said Boylan.

Moving those forces south wasn’t the only thing discussed by the two governments. The U.S. government is also planning “a substantial” investment of \$11 billion over the next four years on 150 projects to upgrade the combined defenses of South Korea, the statement said.

That money will go toward upgrading the Army’s Patriot missile battalion on the peninsula to the newer PAC-3 capability, fielding of unmanned aerial vehicles and the upgrading of the 3rd Squadron, 6th Cavalry Brigade to fly the Army’s most advanced Apache helicopter, the AH-64D Apache Longbow, Boylan said.

South Korea officials also said it would upgrade it’s “military capabilities to strengthen the Alliance” and that the two countries would proceed with an “implementation plan for the transfer of certain missions.”

The South Korean and U.S. governments worked out the details of the plan in two meetings held April 8-9 and during last week’s visit to South Korea by Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz. They agreed to a third round of talks in July 2003.

North and South Korea signed a ceasefire in July 1953, but they are still technically at war. Most of North Korea’s 1.1-million man army and South Korea’s 650,000-man army are located near the 2.5- mile-wide DMZ that separates the two countries.



North Korean leader Kim Jong-il inspects a farm at an unidentified location in North Korea on June 4, 2003. The communist North said on June 9 that it wanted nuclear weapons so it could cut its huge conventional forces and divert funds into an economy foreign analysts say is close to collapse. North Korea’s most explicit public acknowledgement to date that it was seeking to build nuclear weapons also marked the first time Pyongyang had linked its atomic program to cutting its conventional military and saving money. Reuters photo.

North Korea threatens ‘nuclear deterrence’

by San-Hun Choe

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) - North Korea threatened on Monday to build nuclear weapons as a deterrent to what it calls a “hostile” U.S. policy - the communist government’s first public declaration of its nuclear ambitions.

The statement marked a sharpening of the North’s tone in its standoff with Washington. U.S. officials say the North Koreans told them privately that the country already has nuclear bombs and plans to build more - but until now Pyongyang had not openly stated its intention to develop an arsenal.

“If the U.S. keeps threatening the DPRK with nukes instead of abandoning its hostile policy toward Pyongyang, the DPRK will have no option but to build up a nuclear deterrent force,” North Korea’s official news agency said, using the acronym for the nation’s official name, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

Also for the first time, North Korea linked its nuclear efforts to rebuilding its moribund economy.

The North’s “intention to build up a nuclear deterrent force is not aimed to threaten and blackmail others but reduce conventional weapons under a long-term plan and channel manpower resources and funds into economic construction and the betterment of people’s living,” the North’s official news agency said.

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said Monday that North Korea was “acknowledging what the world knows ... that they’ve created a circumstance where their own people are suffering as a result of the decisions that the government has made.”

Although Washington has repeatedly said it prefers a diplomatic solution to the nuclear crisis, Pyongyang has continued to escalate the confrontation - seeking to force the United States into negotiations.

Since late last year, the North has expelled U.N. nuclear inspectors, quit the global arms control treaty, restarted its frozen atomic facilities, and declared it had all but finished reprocessing 8,000 nuclear spent fuel rods - a process that could yield several bombs within months.

But until now, Pyongyang referred only to its need for “physical deterrence” against what it calls U.S. plans to invade the country. President Bush says he prefers a diplomatic solution, but has not ruled out military options.

During talks in Beijing in April, North Korea told U.S. diplomats it is willing to give up its nuclear programs in return for security guarantees and economic aid, which it needs to fight the severe privation and food shortages its 22 million people suffer.



A US soldier sits on a tank for a break at a training range in Paju, near Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), 50 kilometer north of Seoul, Monday, June 9, 2003. In a historic move after a half-century, the United States will pull its ground troops away from DMZ, separating the two Koreas. (AP Photo/Katsumi Kasahara)

Despite its economic plight, North Korea keeps a 1.1 million-strong military, the world’s fifth-largest. Its “army-first” policy calls on its hunger-stricken people to bear economic hardships and build a strong military. The North’s news media churn out daily propaganda filled with anti-American hate.

In 2001, North Korea for the first time admitted that the size of its conventional forces “hampers” its economy and offered to reduce them if the United States withdrew its 37,000 troops from South Korea.

Last week, the United States said it will withdraw its troops further south from the inter-Korean border. It says talks aimed at depriving North Korea of its nuclear ambitions will eventually have to discuss reducing North Korea’s huge deployment near the border.

Addressing Japanese lawmakers at the end of his first official visit to Tokyo, South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun repeated Monday that his country would never accept a nuclear-armed North Korea, but acknowledged that negotiating an end to the standoff would take time.

“I am not hoping that this issue can be solved in a day or two,” Roh said.

Bush, Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Roh have had separate summits in recent weeks and agreed to seek a peaceful

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Russian arms industry under siege

by Vladimir Isachenkov

MOSCOW (AP) - The murder of two defense industry executives on the same day appears to be part of a long-running battle among criminal networks for control of Russia's lucrative state-owned arms trade, observers said Monday.

In murders that appeared to be the work of professionals, gunmen shot and killed a Kremlin-appointed chief of a defense consortium and the commercial director of an affiliated company. Police said the slayings Friday in Moscow could be connected, but refused to comment on the investigation and announced no arrests.

The murder of Igor Klimov, the 41-year-old chief of the Almaz-Antei air defense consortium, generated intense media attention.

"This is the most shocking crime of the year," the daily Moskovsky Komsomolets said.

Later Friday, a gunman shot and killed Sergei Shchitko, commercial director of the RATEP company, a part of the Almaz-Antei consortium.

The consortium, which includes 46 Russian companies involved in the production of air-defense missiles, has been the subject of an internal power struggle.

Although state-owned, many Russian weapons manufacturers have effectively become private ventures run by their managers - some of whom have developed contacts with organized crime - defense analysts and Russian media say.

"The military industrial complex has been plunged into a deep shadow because of its catastrophic condition," The Novaya Gazeta newspaper said.

Pavel Felgenhauer, an independent military analyst, said arms industry executives had long been skimming illegal profits from the trade, which in turn attracted major organized crime groups.

"The weapons industries have become increasingly criminalized," Felgenhauer said. "Enormous illegal revenues have attracted the mob."

Last year, Russia exported \$4.8 billion worth of weapons, ranking second in global weapons sales behind the United States.

Felgenhauer said insufficient controls over the industry have allowed some weapons plants to illegally pocket billions of dollars by selling weapons that were presented as newly built to foreign buyers, but, in fact, were taken from Soviet-era arsenals. False intermediaries have also been used to earn illegal cash, he said.

"Despite being the nominal owner, the state has never seen this



An S-300 air-defense missiles launcher, left, and a S-300 missiles guidance station, right, are seen somewhere at undisclosed location in Russia in this 2001 photo. The double murder in Almaz-Antei, which incorporates 46 Russian companies involved in the production of air-defense missiles, including the most powerful S-300s, comes amid a long struggle for control over the group, which has earned up to US\$2.5 billion over recent years, according to media estimates. (AP Photo)

money," Felgenhauer said in a telephone interview.

Putin has sought to tighten control over the defense industry by ordering the creation of large government holdings such as Almaz-Antei, under close supervision of his administration. But the reform has proceeded with difficulty amid heated battles involving officials and company management.

The Kremlin brought in Klimov - an outsider in the business who had served as an aide to Viktor Ivanov, a powerful deputy chief of staff to President Vladimir Putin - in February as part of the effort to enforce tighter state control and increase revenues. He initiated criminal probes against managers of several companies included in the consortium, including RATEP.

"He broke many corruption schemes and pushed hundreds of people away from their feeding trough - bankers, ministers, bandits," Moskovsky Komsomolets said.

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Iraqi book on war mixes myth, rumors

by Hamza Hendawi

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - The Americans dropped a "tactical nuclear bomb" on Iraqi forces. Saddam Hussein made a final radio broadcast hours after Baghdad fell, pausing three times to stop himself from breaking down on the air. And casualties among U.S.-led coalition forces? Twenty thousand dead.

Iraq's first homegrown book about the war that changed it forever is a 124-page hodgepodge of anti-American tirades and wartime rumors.

"Under the Ashes of the Stormy War," by Islamic author Alaa el-din al-Mudaris, also feeds the web of myths on the whereabouts and actions of Saddam during the crucial days before and after Baghdad's fall at U.S. hands on April 9.

"It's like a literary epic," al-Mudaris said in an interview in his office on the storied al-Motanabi street in Baghdad's old quarter.

"Some things in the book may not be true and the chronological order of events may not be 100 percent correct," he said, "but the book's aim is to restore confidence to Iraqis - to tell them, 'You've fought courageously.'"

Hurriedly written and highly emotional, his book neither provides a remotely reliable account of battlefield hostilities nor captures the trauma of life in Iraq during the war.

Instead, it repeats much of the anti-American rhetoric of Saddam's toppled regime and highlights what the author sees as the battlefield valor of ordinary Iraqis and the Arab volunteers who joined them to try and defend Baghdad.

It also projects a sense of confusion felt by many in a postwar Iraq coming to terms with the conflict and coping with an enduring power vacuum.

Iraqis, al-Mudaris writes, "stand today on the threshold of an unknown tomorrow, a tomorrow in which they only recognize the face of occupation and loss of sovereignty."

Al-Mudaris' claim that U.S. forces dropped a "tactical nuclear weapon" or a "microwave bomb" on Baghdad's airport, pulverizing thousands of Iraqi troops, mirrors a rumor that circulated in the Iraqi capital during the war.

His claim that Saddam used an FM radio frequency to deliver a final address to the Iraqi people the night of Baghdad's fall was the subject of unconfirmed reports that spread at the time.

Al-Mudaris said Saddam sounded like a broken man in his address, speaking of betrayal by the army and the ruling Baath party. "I think



Iraqi author Alaa el-din al-Mudaris holding his book, talks to The Associated Press during an interview in Baghdad, Iraq, Saturday, June 7, 2003. Iraq's first homegrown book about the war that changed it forever is a 124-page hodgepodge of anti-American tirades and wartime rumors. "Under the Ashes of the Stormy War," by Islamic author Alaa el-din al-Mudaris, also feeds the web of myths on the whereabouts and actions of Saddam during the crucial days before and after Baghdad's fall at U.S. hands on April 9. (AP Photo/Murad Sezer)

he was trying to stop himself from breaking down and crying while on the air," al-Mudaris said.

Al-Mudaris acknowledges that "Under the Ashes of the Stormy War" is not the fruit of painstaking research or a thorough examination of events; after all, he wrote it in two weeks. Instead, he says, it is a reflection of how the war is perceived by ordinary Iraqis.

It seems to be working. By Iraqi standards, the book is flying off the shelves.

"It's a bestseller for me right now," said Mohammed Abu Bakr, owner of a Baghdad book stall.

Not many in Iraq, a nation of 24 million reduced to poverty by 13 years of U.N. sanctions, can afford to buy books. Finding out about new ones is often the result of browsing on al-Motanabi street, Baghdad's main book market, or through word of mouth.

"Under The Ashes of a Stormy War," which sells for \$1, came out May 13 in a limited first edition of 1,000 copies. It was published by the Al-Rageem publishing house in Baghdad and funded by the author. A second edition came out this month, and at least 4,000 of the 6,000 printed copies had been sold by the weekend.

"My book is like the spiritual climax of a mystic," said al-Mudaris,

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Normandy vets drop back in

by Charlie Coon, Stars and Stripes

AMFREVILLE, France — Joe “Buck” Tolbert walked hand in hand with his niece, searching the Normandy countryside for memories that were 59 years old.

“I remember it clearly,” he said. “Someone changed the roads. But it hasn’t changed in my mind.”

Tolbert dropped into Normandy on June 9, 1944, three days after the invasion began as part of the 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment. The unit was sent as part of the D-Day invasion to drive the German army from northern France.

On Friday, Tolbert walked the hedgerows again for just the second time. Some of his comrades had come for a ceremony here to honor the fight they waged. As they gathered with some local French people at a monument in the Americans’ honor, Tolbert went in search of something more personal.

“This is all he wanted to do,” said his niece, Beverly Tupper, as they walked through a back yard off a dirt road that had looked familiar to her uncle. “He’s waited 59 years for this.”

They weren’t alone.

Tolbert met a local Frenchman the night before who knew the countryside and the history of the battle for Amfreville. By Friday, a crew of a half-dozen locals had joined in to help Tolbert.

“His very best friend dropped into the water and drowned,” said Tupper, who did most of the talking for her uncle. The area where they’d landed 59 years ago had flooded.

“Joe was desperate, too, but somebody pulled him out,” she said. “There were 189 men in his unit. Eleven lived. Most of it took place right here in Amfreville when they were fighting the Germans.

The niece said her uncle was shot in the face two days after he dropped into Normandy when he tried to steal a truck.

“His commanding officer said they needed it to carry ammunition,” she said. “After he was shot, they took him to a liberty ship. His face was really swollen.

“He told the doctor: ‘No, I want to keep fighting.’ ”

The old soldier was dressed for the search.

Tolbert wore Army fatigues with shiny black boots laced up high. He wore his dog tag around his neck, which he said was still hanging by its original string.

Roger Delarocque, the Frenchman leading the way, was the only local who spoke English. He asked Tolbert if he wished to ride in a car, instead of climbing into an old jeep brought in for the occasion.

“The jeep,” Tolbert replied.



Claude Colas, foreground, a French veteran from Amfreville, attends ceremonies Friday for the 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Colas said he remembers when Allied parachutists landed in his village in 1944 during the D-Day invasion. Photo by Peter Jaeger, Stars and Stripes.

The motorcade drove down dirt roads and between hedgerows, stopping whenever Tolbert sensed something familiar. Then they’d get out and walk. The Frenchmen peppered him with questions, which were translated by Delarocque.

Tolbert walked slowly. He talked slowly with an Oklahoma drawl. But as he scanned pastures and old buildings, his mind worked quickly behind

his furrowed brow.

The small motorcade stopped at a pasture on a one-lane dirt road, and Tolbert once again climbed out of the jeep. He said something into his niece’s ear.

“Is your foxhole out there?” she asked.

“That’s got to be it,” he replied.

But Tolbert did not know for sure. He couldn’t. The roads aren’t the only things that have changed in 59 years. Saplings have grown into trees. Old buildings have been torn down and grown over.

When asked about the small commotion created by the local French, he replied, “These people are trying to help me, and I think they have helped me.” He looked out into the pastures as black-and-white cows wandered close by.

“I wish I could just go bounce around in that field for a while [to find his foxhole]. “I believe we found the place where we were.”

Tolbert later fought in the Battle of the Bulge, where his niece said he was again enlisted to steal trucks for use by the Allies.

His experience paid off.

After the war, he fixed his grandfather’s old truck and used it to haul watermelons in Seminole, Okla. One thing led to another and he eventually built up a trucking company that employed 22 men and ran 30 tractor-trailers.

He and his wife, Shirley, were married for more than 50 years. She died a few years ago. Two years ago, Tolbert had a stroke. His niece said he has made a great recovery.

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Jewish settler youths and members of the media run towards a convoy of Israeli army trucks, the first one, left, carrying a water tower after the troops removed it at Armona, the only structure at this West Bank outpost, near the settlement of Ofra Monday June 9, 2003. Settlers blocked the way of the troops demonstrating against them after they began dismantling uninhabited West Bank settlement outposts, taking down a few of the dozens of outposts Israel has to remove under a U.S.-backed peace plan. (AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis)

Normandy vets drop back in continued

“His mind is very sharp,” she said.

Tolbert’s motorcade pulled up to yet another house that looked familiar. A woman old enough to remember the battle came out. She answered Delarocque’s questions as best she could.

The old soldier wandered behind her property. He walked behind an old shed and looked out past some trees, said something in his niece’s ear.

The entourage returned to their cars — Tolbert in his jeep — and motored away down dusty one-lane road. The lady stood on her doorstep, smiled and waved goodbye.

The search party returned for lunch at a local reception.

Tolbert leaned on the jeep and thought about what the trip has meant.

“I still didn’t see what I’d come to find — unless that was it back there,” he said, referring to the cow pasture.

“And I think it was.”

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North Korea threatens ‘nuclear deterrence’ continued

resolution to the crisis over North Korea’s nuclear programs. But all three leaders warned of tougher measures if Pyongyang escalates tensions.

The Koreans announced Monday that they agreed to connect their railways at the border on Saturday, the first such link in a half century. Korea was divided at the end of World War II, and the last train to cross the border did so shortly before the 1950-53 Korean War.

It remains unclear when U.S. and North Korean officials will meet again to discuss ending the nuclear crisis. North Korea has said it might consider U.S. demands for talks involving several nations, if it can first meet one-on-one with the United States. Washington says talks to defuse tensions should include Russia, China, South Korea and Japan.

The dispute flared in October when U.S. officials said North Korea admitted it had a clandestine nuclear program in violation of a 1994 agreement with Washington.

Iraqi book on war mixes myth, rumors continued

who has authored 42 mostly religious and short books. “I was a witness to the tragedy of Saddam’s overthrow, the tragedy of Baghdad’s fall and the tragedy of the looting and thefts that followed. These are things that agitated me mentally.”

A father of five and a fundamentalist, al-Mudaris shares many Iraqis’ conviction that the war was not about democratic rule or ridding Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, but about the country’s vast oil wealth.

The U.S.-led occupation, he wrote, “replaced the darkness of oppression and tyranny with the darkness of colonialism.”

Al-Mudaris, detained for seven months in 1995 for illegally dealing in U.S. dollars, is somewhat ambivalent about Saddam’s legacy. He shifts from outright condemnation to almost apologizing for his deposed leader’s excesses.

He portrays Saddam as both a tyrant and a courageous man who personally took part in defending Baghdad after he was betrayed by his army and Baath fighters.

In an imaginary dialogue between the ousted Iraqi leader and “the people of Iraq,” the author seems to even offer some justification for Saddam’s excesses during his 23-year rule.

In the dialogue, Saddam is asked why he chose to be a dictator. In response, he cites the assassinations and bouts of violence that plagued Iraqi politics for much of the last century.

“It was not easy to govern a rebellious people like the Iraqis,” Saddam says in the dialogue. “Absolute, one-man rule to impose control was necessary.”

Kabul peacekeepers take new precautions continued

Over the last few months, assailants have struck at peacekeepers with grenades, rockets and assault rifles in several separate incidents, but inflicted only light casualties and until this weekend.

“The type of terrorist attacks and the amount of terrorist attacks is in line with what we have been expecting and what we still expect - I’m sorry to say that - for the upcoming future,” Lobbering said.

One 17-year-old Afghan boy - a bystander - was killed in Saturday’s attack and between 5 to 10 Afghans were wounded, said Dutch Lt. Col. Paul Kolken, another ISAF spokesman. The taxi driver, whose nationality was unknown, was also killed.

Saturday’s deaths were the first hostile fatalities on the multinational peacekeeping force since it was established to help maintain security in Kabul in December 2001.

Lobbering said the use of buses would be temporarily suspended, but refused to say what added security precautions the peacekeeping force would employ. On Sunday, peacekeepers patrolled Kabul’s potholed streets in jeeps and armored cars as usual.

In Germany, there were calls for increased security measures to protect the nation’s soldiers serving in peacekeeping missions in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Bosnia.

The Frankfurt Allgemeine Zeitung alleged in its Sunday edition the

army ignored warnings from Germany’s secret service in early May that a return of warring drug mafia leaders had increased the risk in Afghanistan. German Defense Minister Peter Struck denied the charges.

Nobody has claimed responsibility for the latest attack, but authorities have accused remnants of Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaida network, supporters of the defeated Taliban regime and rebel leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. All three groups have been blamed for stepped up attacks across the country.



An Afghan soldier clears the road after an explosion in Kabul, Afghanistan, Saturday, June 7, 2003. A bomb ripped through a bus carrying German peacekeepers through Kabul on Saturday, killing at least three soldiers and wounding eight in the deadliest attack on the international force in Afghanistan, U.S. official said. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)



Members of the Army Gold Knights parachute team jump into Atlanta Turner Field before the start of the Atlanta Braves game Sunday. AP photo by Ric Feld.



Remaining foreigners are evacuated by French military helicopters from the US embassy in Monrovia, Liberia, Monday June 9 2003. The evacuations came as President Charles Taylor's soldiers reported more fighting with rebel forces bearing down on the western edge of the city, and explosions sounded in the distance. (AP Photo/Ben Curtis)



Looted artifacts are seen on a table at the Iraqi National Museum in Baghdad, Iraq, in this May 6, 2003 file photo, after they were recovered. The world-famous treasures of Nimrud, unaccounted for since Baghdad fell two months ago, have been found in good condition in the Central Bank, in a secret vault-inside-a-vault, submerged in sewage water. U.S. occupation forces also announce that fewer than 50 items from the Iraqi National Museum's main exhibition remain unaccounted for after April's looting and destruction. (AP Photo/Murad Sezer)



Sadr, a poor district of Baghdad, Iraq, is seen from the air Thursday. Government buildings, military and communication facilities were destroyed by precision bombings during the war. AP photo by Bullit Marquez.



Four members of the Navy Blue Angels fly past an American flag during the Quad City Air Show in Davenport, Iowa, on Sunday. AP photo by Sean Gallagher, Quad-City Times.

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